THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh has submitted a three year Action Plan (1996-97 to 1998-99) for strengthening police force and development in Naxalite affected areas at a total cost of Rs. 1299.17 crore. The Action Plan was examined keeping in view similar problems being experienced by the States of Orissa, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh would have to dovetail their existing development programmes in Naxalite affected areas and approach the concerned Central Ministries for assistance under different Central schemes being administered by them.

Maternity Leave

*213. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Council of Paediatricians had suggested the Fifth Central Pay Commission for grant of six months maternity leave to women Government employees bearing upto two children, followed by a period of half-day half-pay in the interest of the newly born-babies-who represent as the futher citizens of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission in the light thereof and the decision of Government thereon alongwith the reasons for not accepting the recommendations of the Paediatric Specialists in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING AND DEPARTMENT OF PENSION AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Details of suggestions made by the various organisations to the Fifth Central Pay Commission are not available. Accordingly, it is not possible to confirm or provide the details of the suggestions made by National Council of

Paediatricians to the Commission. However, a demand was widely made before the Pay Commission to increase the period of maternity leave for 90 days to 180 days. The Fifth Central Pay Commission, however, recommended enhancement of period of maternity leave from 90 days to 135 days only which has been accepted by the Government.

The Pay Commission recommended introduction of a voluntary system of option for serving women employees to work half time for a maximum of six years in a career when the children are young and family commitments are at the maximum. However, the suggestion for allowing women employees to work half day with half pay and allowances had already been considered earlier and not found acceptable for various reasons.

Encouraging the growth of software industry

*214. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the software industry has been one of the fastest growing industries in the electronic sector;

(b) whether the export of software has recorded a growth of forty three percent over the Eighth Plan period reaching $1042 million in 1996-97 and $1749 million in 1997-98;

(c) whether during the same period, the domestic growth rate was about fifty-two percent touching Rs. 2600 crores by 1996-97 and Rs. 3470 crores in 1997-98; and

(d) what steps Government have taken to encourage this industry and stimulate further growth in view of the phenomenal sustained growth rate in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A statement is enclosed.

Statement

The Government of India has set up the Ministry of Information Technology on 15.10.1999 to facilitate all initiatives in the IT sector including Internet, e-commerce, IT education and IT based education.